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ABSTRACT

This program outlines a plan, using a series of competency-based exams, to evaluate student progress in given courses taken at the National College of Education. It details a method by which students request and take sequential competency tests for specific course work during a term of registration. The program also outlines provisions for academic probation, course withdrawal, incompletes, and the transfer of credit. (JB)

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37

# A PERFORMANCE-BASED PLAN FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Submitted to
The American Association of
Colleges for Teacher Education
as a part of its
Program of Excellence in Teacher Education

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by

National College of Education
Evanston, Illinois

November 15, 1972

SP 006 409

PREFACE

The contents of this brochure include:


| | page |
|---|---|
| (1) Summary of Project | 1 |
| (2) Case Study | 3 |
| (3) Abstract Form | 41 |


The case study contains, along with other material, a re-ordering of statements previously made in an article entitled "Grades Have Gone: What Then?" by Lewis Troyer, published in Liberal Education, Vol. LVI, No. 4, December, 1970. A copy of the article is appended. The abstract form is a brief explanation of the plan appearing in the 1972-1973 College Catalog.

Should the College receive recognition for this project toward the Distinguished Achievement Award, we have some ideas for a modest but attractive exhibit at the annual meeting of A.A.C.T.E.

Respectfully submitted,

Lewis Troyer

Faculty Representative

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Evanston, Illinois
Calvin E. Gross, President

A NEW PERFORMANCE-BASED PATTERN FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS was initiated in September, 1969, to apply to each and every course in the College curriculum for the Bachelor of Arts degree. It is now operating in its fourth year with continued support of both faculty and students. It has received commendation as innovative and bearing possibly far-reaching implications by the regional accreditation authority. After extensive study of the traditional grading system as a means for accomplishing the newly stated liberal-arts-in-teacher-education objectives of its educational program, and with experience in the student teaching area with performance criteria, the College abandoned the older system of grades, and adopted and implemented a new pattern which includes: (1) Identification by instructors of appropriate competencies to be demonstrated in each course; (2) Student demonstration of all the listed competencies before completion of the course for credit; (3) Flexible timing for completion, varying from early credit by demonstration to a maximum period of three academic terms; (4) Focus of instructional effort less on presentation of content and more on individualization and personal interaction in assisting students to achieve course goals, and

(5) Recording of achievement in terms of the actual competencies demonstrated and courses completed rather than in letter grades or grade-point averages. This all-institutional change has been accomplished without special or outside funding.

# A NEW PERFORMANCE-BASED PLAN FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

(A Case Study)

1. Context and Rationale
2. Elements of the New Plan
3. Examples of Competency Lists
4. Problems and Prospects
5. Evaluation Procedures
6. Budget
7. How the Plan Improves Teacher Education

With the advent of the 1969-1970 academic year National College of Education, Evanston, Illinois, abandoned the traditional grading system "lock, stock, and barrel." This significant change was made essentially because the faculty of the college, after careful study, became convinced that the so-called letter-grade pattern functioned to subvert rather than to support the goals of the curriculum for both the student and the institution. A new and hopefully more effective scheme of evaluation based on the designation and demonstration of specific sets of competencies appropriate to given courses and levels of learning was developed, subjected to scrutiny by both faculty and students, and is currently in its fourth year of operation.

## Context and Rationale

While the new plan at National College of Education is obviously part of the more general response of the times to "do something" about grades, it embodies certain unique features and a combination of particulars that go beyond what has been developed or tried elsewhere. It is singularly free, for example, from the various compromises which have marred and eventually destroyed earlier modifications in grading at the college level. It does not simply substitute words for letters or numerical symbols--"fail," "pass," "honors," "high honors," etc., for A, B, C, D, F--as if a grade by any other name were not still a grade. It is not a "pass-fail" system

separating the goats from the sheep but blithely ignoring any distinctions among the sheep. Nor does it maintain a double standard of evaluation--one for the student, and another under the table for other institutions and employers. It is quite literally a new and different pattern of evaluation with a very different emphasis probably not translatable at all in terms of letter symbols and grade-point averages.

The measurement specialist would classify this pattern as "criterion-referenced" rather than "norm-referenced." It is grounded on the assumption that students are unique human beings and that all of them--or very nearly all--can develop adequacy and effectiveness if given proper instruction and time to grow (or learn), and if the self-esteem of each is not destroyed in insidious comparison with others supposedly better, smarter, or faster. The object is to maximize the potential of all, in a society more and more dependent upon the intelligence and personal development of the total population, rather than to encourage continuance of an intellectual elitism characteristic of societies of the past. The plan holds high but not unrealistic standards of accomplishment for everyone and makes it possible within broad limits of time and teaching effort for each to go as far or as deep or as high as he can.

Under this plan no student can squeak through by having "passed" only part of a course. All students must meet the

same performance criteria by demonstrating the required competencies. There is no possibility of settling for a C or a B and avoiding the learning necessary to acquire an A. For some it may take a little longer, as the current TV commercial on the gaining of crowns has it, but all students, even the slower ones, have a real opportunity to succeed. In other words, the plan puts the focus on learning and achievement for each individual student. It sees this as the fundamental basis or reason for evaluation. That, at least, must be accomplished first, and all other purposes are to be subordinated and made incidental to it.

To provide some appreciation of the particularity of this new system of evaluation it is useful to review briefly the background of concern and action at the college within which it emerged. Some of this context is unique to the particular institution; some of it is shared by many other colleges and universities. Probably the most formative factor in the scene was the inauguration in 1965 of a new curriculum which the college community has defined as "liberal-arts-in-teacher-education." The rationale of this curriculum includes the following pertinent declaration.

"It is very important for both students and teachers to realize that the primary focus of the curriculum is not upon acquisition of information or the attainment of knowledge as such. Knowledge is important, of course, but it is instrumental

to something even more important. The primary end sought is a transformation or growth in the student.

"This transformation includes knowing, but it expresses itself in the development of certain intellectual abilities and skills: in the comprehension and application of knowledge; in analysis of elements, relationships, and principles of knowledge; in synthesis of knowledge through communication, classification, and explanation; in evaluation of knowledge through teaching.

"This growth in the student, moreover, will have a strong affective component, denoting more than a simple awareness or even a willingness to acquiesce in a pattern of conformity. Satisfaction in learning, formulation of values, commitment to values, the development of an intelligent and viable personal philosophy of life are ideal outcomes. The student is expected to change; he should expect to become a different, it is hoped a better, more adequate, person as a result of this opportunity. For this type of education promotes the resourcefulness of personality which is able to build on new experience, which leads to continued growth in personal and professional effectiveness throughout life. This resourcefulness is found in the attitudes, values, and understandings of students. It is these which must be changed, developed, enriched in a college education."[1]

Such a statement, as many will no doubt testify, can appear in a college catalogue as part of the public relations dressing typical of present-day advertising techniques. It need not be taken seriously, or literally, by anyone. But what if it were? What if a faculty and a student body chose to use it as the intellectual charter for determining the validity of the on-going educational program? How, with these principles in mind, would the quality of a curriculum be assessed? How would the achievement by students of these objectives be measured?

This particular institution, through its faculty, found itself wrestling with such questions as it sought to determine for itself, and in the future for accrediting authorities, whether the new curriculum was any better than the old. A year of special study, in which instructional objectives for all departments and courses were reformulated, led to the realization that the letter-grade system and grade-point averages were indeed questionable means for measurement of the most important of the acknowledged objectives. To this realization was added widespread circulation and perusal of current literature on the problems of grading. The personnel engaged in supervision of student teaching had also acquired some positive experience over a considerable time with using performance criteria to determine professional growth and readiness.

Consequently, on 10 July, 1968, the Council on Academic Standards, charged with responsibility for development and administration of policy concerning evaluation of student progress, recommended to the faculty a revolution in grading practices to become effective with the opening of the 1969-1970 school year. It further recommended that the 1968-1969 year be spent in studying the implications of, and tooling up for, the proposed change. Faculty meetings and workshops were subsequently held for these purposes, and the faculty voted general approval of the plan in December. It reserved final enactment, however, until the student body had had a chance to discuss and react to the proposal. By the early weeks of the spring term several meetings and opinion polls had been conducted, and the Student Senate reported that the student response, while divided over certain specific items, was favorable to the plan and its proposed time of implementation, including total application to all classes. The faculty then completed its enabling action.

Thus, every effort was made to involve the entire campus community, or at least all those who would be immediately affected, in the decision-making and in accepting this step as a significant experiment in harmony with the fundamental philosophy of the college. During the summer of 1969 a letter explaining the new venture was sent to all parents of currently enrolled and newly accepted students, including one sentence

which expressed something of the depth of faculty conviction and commitment: "We think it has a chance of restoring to your sons and daughters the zest for learning and a realization of the true values of education."

Undoubtedly important in the development of the consensus underlying the reported action was the growing body of contemporary literature, particularly from the fields of educational measurement and psychology of learning, bearing on the problems of grading. No attempt can be made here to give an extensive summary of this literature, but certain crucially influential items need mentioning to complete this orientation to the plan adopted.

Certainly first in consideration was the evidence, such as that summarized by Hoyt,[2] which clearly indicates that grades are system-bound in predictive value--that is, they are predictive of levels of success in obtaining other grades within the educational system itself but have little or no value in indicating later professional or vocational achievement. Secondly, there was the position taken by psychologists and represented by Robert Glaser in the Spring, 1968, issue of Educational Record, where he goes so far as to declare that one of the "ten untenable assumptions" or "major myths" of college instruction is "That course grades tell us what the student knows and can do."[3] His summary of the distinction between criterion-referenced and norm-referenced evaluation is especially to the point.

Perhaps most influential in affecting the thinking of faculty members at National College of Education has been the work and writing of Benjamin Bloom and associates. The impact of their recently constructed taxonomies of educational objectives is clearly reflected in the statement on the curriculum quoted above from the college catalogue.[4] Even more potent in effect, however, have been Bloom's more recent statement concerning "learning for mastery."[5] His strong criticism of the application of the normal curve in educational measurement, his new and challenging rendering of the concept of aptitude as a function of time in learning, and his recommendation that realistic performance standards be set and followed by instructional procedures enabling the majority of students to attain these standards, certainly provided theoretical foundations for the new departure.

Attention needs also to be called to the constructive work of Robert Bauernfeind of Northern Illinois University in developing for use in his graduate classes in educational measurement a so-called "goal-card" approach to evaluation.[6] Bauernfeind, it should be noted, acknowledges finding the suggestive lead for his scheme in the "goal-contract" plan instituted a quarter of a century ago in the Winnetka, Illinois, elementary schools under the early leadership of Carleton Washburne.[7] Many members of the National College of Education faculty have been well acquainted with the Winnetka experience.

Since the total orientation of the college for 86 years has been toward the production of elementary teachers, this faculty, consequently, has had little disposition to feel itself above learning from the insight and experience of elementary education. Perhaps this also helps to account for the emphasis in the college philosophy on the student as a unique and total being and on his development as a person as central to the educational enterprise.

In summing up its reasons for adopting the new evaluation system, the proposal of the Council on Academic Standards contains both a listing of serious drawbacks of the traditional grading pattern and a positive statement of the criteria to be met by any substitute system.

The apparent drawbacks include: (1) the tendency of present symbols (letters) to become empty of content and meaning and thus to encourage legerdemain and illusion; (2) the reliance upon dubious statistical procedures such as the G.P.A. and the normal curve, with simplistic faith that these reflect educational reality; (3) the lack of sufficient feedback so that the student may know where he really stands and what he really knows; (4) the emphasis on comparison, sometimes certainly invidious, of student with student, or of individual student with a numerical group or category, rather than upon intrinsic factors of achievement in and by the student himself; (5) the deleterious effect, already widely evident among

entering high school graduates, of the pursuit of grades (or resignation to low grades) on the mental health of the student, particularly on his self-esteem and openness to further learning; (6) the inadequacy of the system for self-appraisal, honest self-evaluation and accurate diagnosis; (7) the tendency of the system to encourage a morality of getting by and of "beating the system," at the expense of genuine personal development.

A satisfactory system, in contrast, would (1) aid the learner to assess realistically his own strengths and weaknesses; (2) provide both teacher and learner with insights helpful to both learning and teaching; (3) be consistent with values and purposes acknowledged by both individual student and institution; (4) be broad enough to encompass total purposes, both personal and institutional; (5) produce records appropriate to the purposes of both student and institution.

The plan adopted, and presented in detail below, while certainly not considered perfect by anyone, provides, it is believed, a means of overcoming the apparent deficiences in the traditional system and of fulfilling the positive criteria. One faculty member spoke the viewpoint of most of his colleagues in saying: "This new plan calls for a chain of events in which the student has a number of concrete opportunities to show his competencies. It affords a chance for the student to address himself directly to the attainment of these competencies,

and thus to his own learning and personal development. It views success and failure in terms of situations realistically defined and emphasizes a positive rather than a negative, a constructive rather than a punitive psychology. It recognizes fully the significance of individual differences in growth patterns, learning, and, indeed, in the end-product of education. It provides the instructor, as well as the student, with a less ambiguous opportunity to be authentic in his own efforts and to realize himself in his learning and teaching."

## Elements of the New Plan

The following is the official version of the newly implemented evaluation plan as it appears in the resolution passed by the faculty.

"I. The academic standing of a student in a course taken for credit toward graduation with a Bachelor of Arts degree is reported by the instructor to the Registrar at the end of the term of registration, or at such other times as may indicate completion of course requirements. Only courses completed are listed on the official transcript of the student.

"If a student has not completed the requirements of a course by the end of the term of first registration, he may elect to receive an incomplete and to finish the course by no later than the close of the next term in residence. An incomplete is not automatically given at the end of the first term

of registration: it must be specifically requested by the student, and this fact reported to the Registrar prior to enrolment in a new term, or registration in the course is cancelled. The same rule holds also for the removal of the incomplete when course requirements have been met not later than the end of the second term of registration. It is a departmental prerogative to determine with whom, and in what fashion, a student may resolve an incomplete. Students who have not completed the requirements of a course by the end of the second term in residence following first registration in the course may have an opportunity to attain the required competencies through a second registration at full tuition cost the next time the course is offered. For required courses such repetition of the course for credit is mandatory. Then, if no credit is obtained after the second registration, the Council on Academic Standards considers the advisability of further enrolment in the college. In further governing the matter of incompletes, the following rule pertains to the total registered course load of the student: on the assumption that an incomplete represents only a portion of a course to be completed, the load scale is three new courses plus one incomplete; two new courses plus two incompletes; or one new course plus three incompletes.

"II. For each course in which a student registers he will be provided with a competency list which will designate the

specific competencies or demonstrated accomplishments expected of all who complete the course. This list will include accomplishments appropriate to all-college, departmental, and specific course objectives. To complete the course, a student must have each item on the list checked by the instructor, and the signature of the instructor must be entered upon the space provided for it. An official copy thus checked and signed is filed with the Registrar at the time of completion of the course. A signed statement in case of an incomplete is also filed by the instructor with the Registrar if the student has under the proper conditions requested it. The copy of the completed list and/or statement of incomplete is made a part of the student's cumulative file.

"III. A regularly registered student in a given course may request the privilege of demonstrating required competencies at any time from the registration date to the final deadline for removing an incomplete, except as otherwise indicated below. If competencies are completed before the end of the registration period for the current term, the student may elect to secure credit for the course under the rule providing examination for credit, and may enrol at once in a replacement course if he so chooses.

"Demonstrations may be in terms of single competencies listed, or groups of such competencies, or of the entire list.

The instructor shall, however, determine how, when, and with whom the demonstrations may be made, and shall arrange a normal schedule for this purpose to take into account the natural sequence of learning experiences projected for the course. Where participation in certain types of class activities is an intrinsic part of the objectives of a course, and a fortiori of the achievement of specific competencies, such participation may be listed among the competencies required. The student should at all times be fully aware of the general importance of attendance and of the fact that some competencies may not be achievable without being present where the action is taking place.

"A student who has requested a demonstration but subsequently failed to receive approval may not thereafter request separate privilege to repeat the demonstration, but must adhere to the schedule set up for the course as a whole by the instructor. A student who has completed all required goals of a course prior to the end of the term may have the option of disengaging from the course at that point, or of electing further independent study for depth and enrichment of his own education.

"IV. Space is provided on the competency scale for recording, above and beyond the required accomplishments, completion of one or more optional study projects, or other clearly

superior achievements among the established goals. The instructor may recommend the student for honors recognition. Such extra participation and achievement are reported by the Registrar to the College Honors Committee in the cases of freshman and sophomore student to the Chairman of the Department providing the student's field of concentration for junior and senior students, and to the Chairman of the Education Department in connection with courses in the Professional Sequence. Certification by one or more of these authorities provides the basis for special recognition at the annual college honors convocation. At the time of graduation the number of terms in which honors have been received is noted on the official record, but such honors signification is not attached (as a grade would be) to specific courses. Record of such achievements is also maintained as a part of the student's permanent record of competencies achieved. This information may be cited in letters of recommendation.

"V. A student is placed on <u>academic probation</u> whenever a terminated course without credit is reported. His case is reviewed periodically thereafter until he succeeds in clearing deficiencies or is dismissed from the college by action of the Council on Academic Standards. Academic probation as such does not, however, imply lack of good standing.

"After formal admission to the college a student continues in good standing only as he makes progress in the degree

program which he has planned with his college advisers. Should he fail to achieve this progress over a reasonable period of time, he will be dropped from enrolment because of deficient scholarship. It is the student's responsibility to meet all requirements for continued enrolment. For purposes of academic classification a student, therefore, is in good standing as long as he is permitted to remain enrolled in the college."

Minor changes have been made in this original policy statement as experience has required. These are reflected in the Abstract Form attached to this Case Study. The Abstract Form presents the details of the Plan as it currently obtains.

## Examples of Competency Lists

Competency lists have been prepared by faculty members and departments for all courses in the present schedule of classes. While it would be impossible to include here all or even many of these lists, it is necessary to a fairly complete picture of the system to provide a sampling of the whole.

I

Record of Competencies

Student's Name:_____

Course: English 1, Communication I _____ Section____

Term Registered: F_____ W_____ S_____ Su_____ Yr._____

Date of Completion_____ Incomplete_____

| Required Competencies | Demonstrated | Optional Comment |
|---|---|---|
| A. Written Communication | | |
| 1. Use of library and information sources . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Organization of source materials . | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Understanding of manual form (MLA). | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Analysis, organization, and development of ideas . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Command of basic mechanics of grammar and punctuation and accurate proofreading . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Acquisition of college level content and structure, and appropriate treatment and style . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Acquisition of skills needed for writing of essay examinations . . . | _____ | _____ |
| B. Spoken Communication | | |
| 1. Analysis of appropriate ideas, their selection, organization, and presentation . . . . . | _____ | _____ |

2. Application of techniques and skills of effective speech . . . . . _____ _____

3. Acquisition of skills relevant to panel and group participation . . . _____ _____

C. Reading Competency

1. Comprehension of ideas through explaining and summarizing . . . . _____ _____

2. Analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of materials: concepts of style, structure, and author's purpose and point of view; universality, originality, and application to life . . . _____ _____

3. Demonstrated mastery of appropriate basic subject matter . . . . . _____ _____

D. Listening Competency

1. Comprehension of ideas through explaining and summarizing . . . . _____ _____

2. Analysis of relationships of ideas _____ _____

3. Sensitivity to ideas as related to note-taking . . . . . _____ _____

4. Logical and critical response to ideas presented--to illogical arguments and emotional appeals . . . . . _____ _____

Optional Projects

Anecdotal statement of instructor (not required for completion of course):

_____ _____

(Date) (Instructor's Signature)

II

Record of Competencies

Student's Name:_____

Course: Mathematics 1, Math. I_____ Section_____

Term Registered: F_____ W_____ S_____ Su_____ Yr._____

Date of Completion:_____ Incomplete:_____

| Required Competencies | Completed |
|---|---|
| A. Communicate accurately selected principles, laws, concepts and processes | |
| 1. Define basic mathematical terms . . . . | _____ |
| 2. List and/or state basic axioms and theorems . . . . . | _____ |
| 3. Explain mathematical procedures . . . . | _____ |
| B. Solve problems by the application of logic | |
| 1. Formulate and test hypotheses . . . . . | _____ |
| 2. Validate arguments . . . . . | _____ |
| 3. Analyze and compare various mathematical algorithms . . . . . | _____ |
| 4. Interpret relations and functions . . . | _____ |
| C. Apply knowledge gained to a variety of situations | |
| 1. Compute by a variety of algorithms . . | _____ |
| 2. Perceive relations and patterns . . . . | _____ |
| 3. Synthesize new procedures from old . . | _____ |
| 4. Write numbers in a variety of ways . . | _____ |
| 5. Solve problems common to the physical world in which we live . . . . . | _____ |

## Optional Projects

1. _____

2. _____

Comment by instructor:

_____ _____

(Date) (Instructor's Signature)

III

Record of Competencies

Student's Name_____

Course: Ed. 3, 4, Stu. Tchng. Half Day_____ All Day_____ Age or Grade_____

Term Registered: F_____ W_____ S_____ Su_____ Year_____

Date of Completion:_____ Incomplete_____

Required Competencies

1. Performs duties appropriate to professional role; is reliable in fulfilling obligations
2. Respects the rights of others
3. Seeks and uses suggestions
4. Evaluates himself objectively
5. Works cooperatively with individuals and groups
6. Is resourceful, volunteers and implements ideas
7. Uses original and discerning approaches to teaching
8. Copes with demands of teaching situations with poise, stability, and maturity
9. Recognizes the causes of behavior
10. Uses discretion and judgment in making decisions
11. Exhibits sufficient general knowledge to teach effectively
12. Exhibits adequate skills in written communication
13. Exhibits adequate skills in spoken communication
14. Exhibits listening skills
15. Evidences knowledge of curriculum appropriate to age level
16. Shows awareness of growth and development by planning appropriate learning activities

17. Uses diagnostic procedures to individualize learning

18. Uses adequate procedures for evaluating the achievement and growth of pupils

Optional Comment:

IV

Record of Competencies

Name of Student:_____

Course: Phil.-R. 5/So. Sci. 15: Hist. & Phil. of Ed. Sec:___

Term Registered: F_____ W_____ S_____ Su_____ Yr._____

Date of Completion:_____ Incomplete:_____

| Content* | Competencies* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Knowledge (Terms, facts, ideas) | Comprehension (Translation, interpretation) | Analysis (Elements, relations, principles) | Synthesis (Unification, generalization) | Evaluation (internal evidence, ext. criteria) | Skills of Procedure (Communication, logic) | Involvement (Responsiveness, Commitment |
| Education for a Closed Society | | | | | | | |
| Education for an Eloquent Society | | | | | | | |
| Education for a Sacral Society | | | | | | | |
| Education for a Theocentric Society | | | | | | | |
| Education for a Worldly Society | | | | | | | |
| Education for a Worldly Society | | | | | | | |
| Education for an Enlightened Society | | | | | | | |
| Education for a Progressive Society | | | | | | | |
| Education for a Free Society | | | | | | | |

Anecdotal Comment (Optional):

Date:_____ Signature:_____

* ✓ = adequate; ✓+ = outstanding quality; ✓− = inadequate

V

## Record of Competencies

Name of Student:_____

Course: So.Sci. 10/Phil.-R. 7, Soc. & Pol. Phil. Sec:_____

Term Registered: F_____ W_____ S_____ Su_____ Yr._____

Date of Completion:_____ Incomplete:_____

| Content* | Competencies* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Knowledge (Terms, facts, ideas) | Comprehension (Translation, interpretation) | Analysis (Elements, relations, principles | Synthesis (Unification, generalization) | Evaluation (internal evidence, ext. criteria) | Skills of Procedure (Communication, logic) | Involvement (Responsiveness, commitment) |
| I. Why Utopia? | | | | | | | |
| II. Utopias Revisited | | | | | | | |
| III. Contra Utopia | | | | | | | |
| IV. Utopian Rejoinders | | | | | | | |
| V. Enduring Questions I: | | | | | | | |
| 1. Nature of Politics | | | | | | | |
| 2. Authority | | | | | | | |
| 3. Forms of Government | | | | | | | |
| 4. Freedom | | | | | | | |
| 5. Equality | | | | | | | |

Soc. Sci. 10/Phil.-Rel. 7 (cont.)

Competencies*

| Content* | Knowledge (Terms, facts, ideas | Comprehension (Translation, interpretation) | Analysis (Elements, relations, principles) | Synthesis (Unification, generalization) | Evaluation (Internal evidence, ext. criteria) | Skills of Procedure (Communication, logic) | Involvement (Responsiveness, commitment) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VI. Enduring Questions II: | | | | | | | |
| 1. Government and Economics | | | | | | | |
| 2. International Society | | | | | | | |
| VII. Term Project | | | | | | | |

Anecdotal Comment (Optional):

Date:_____ Signature:_____

* ✓ = adequate; $\overset{+}{\checkmark}$ = outstanding quality; $\overset{-}{\checkmark}$ = inadequate

VI

Record of Competencies

Name of Student_____

Course: Psychology 2, Psych. of Early Childhood Section:____

Term Registered: F_____ W_____ S_____ Su_____ Yr._____

Date of Completion:_____ Incomplete:_____

| Required Competencies | Demonstrated | Optional Comment |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Observe children in preschools and primary classrooms. Record and summarize observed behaviors . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Discuss the developmental tasks of the preschool and primary years--including relevant theory and research as well as observational data . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Compare goals and methods of a variety of nursery schools . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Read and discuss implications of current articles and books involving applications of psychology to early childhood education . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Discuss methods of meeting needs of different cultural groups in early childhood education . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Summarize and evaluate important aspects of films, lectures, and conferences with educators involved in early childhood education . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Compile a folder or notebook including weekly progress reports, observations, outside readings and summarizations of films, discussions and resources--supplemented by individual interpretations . . . . . | _____ | _____ |
| Optional Projects: | _____ | _____ |

Anecdotal statement of instructor: (not required for completion of course.)

Date:_____ Signature:_____

VII

Goal Work Sheet

Student's Name:_____ Classification:_____

Course: Science I, Life Science

Term: F_____ W_____ S_____ Su_____ Yr._____

Date Completed:_____ Incomplete:_____

| Demonstrated Competencies | Progress toward Completion |
|---|---|
| A. Communicate accurately: selected principles, laws, concepts and processes. | |
| 1. Improve from pre- to post-test . . . | |
| 2. Origin of life, taxonomy, and protista | |
| 3. Phylum Chlorophyta through Tracheophyta . . . . . | |
| 4. Phylum Porifera through Chordata . . | |
| 5. Systems: Skeletal, Muscular, Nutritive | |
| 6. Systems: Circulatory, Nervous, Sensory, Excretory, Reproductive, Endocrine | |
| B. Solve problems by using the scientific method | |
| 1. Identify regional flora . . . . . | |
| 2. Experiment, record and conclude: | |
| a. Protista . . . . . | |
| b. Lower plants . . . . . | |
| c. Tracheophytes . . . . . | |
| d. Hydra . . . . . | |
| e. Planaria . . . . . | |
| f. Earthworm . . . . . | |
| g. Digestive system . . . . . | |

| Science I, Life Science (cont.) | Progress toward Completion | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Draw and label observations scientifically . . . . . | | | |
| a. Digestive system . . . . . | | | |
| b. Reproductive system . . . . . | | | |
| 4. Manipulate skillfully the appropriate apparatus . . . . . | | | |
| a. Light microscope . . . . . | | | |
| b. Dissecting scope . . . . . | | | |
| c. General laboratory procedures . . | | | |
| 5. Point out, in laboratory practicals, anatomy and functions of representative specimens . . . . . | | | |
| a. First practical . . . . . | | | |
| b. Second (or mid-term) practical . . | | | |
| c. Final practical . . . . . | | | |
| C. Apply knowledge gained to various situations . . . . . | | | |
| 1. Compare two authors' views on a single topic . . . . . | | | |
| 2. Summarize and react to two current periodical articles . . . . . | | | |

Recommended for honors on the basis of:

_____ _____

Date Instructor

## Problems and Prospects

It is accepted as axiomatic that the proof of the pudding is in the eating and that problems will no doubt arise in the attempted implementation of the new evaluation design. The first years of operation have become, therefore, a period for "working out the bugs." Even the possibility that the design might prove ineffective was admitted from the first, without as yet cutting the nerve. Success, as well as failure, it is assumed, may be self-prophesying. Nevertheless, real success will continue to depend upon meeting squarely and overcoming the problems that arise. It may be the better part of wisdom, therefore, to acknowledge that some such problems have already taken on recognizable shape.

The perceptive reader will perhaps have noted a tendency at least toward inconsistency of concept in the competency lists presented above. The impression would be greatly strengthened by perusal of all of the lists so far developed. Most participants are apparently in favor of the general approach, but there are still wide differences in the specific denotation given to the term "competency." This variation at present extends from the one extreme, which holds that any prescribed unit of external behavior constitutes a competency, to the opposite extreme that competencies are really "states of mind" which cannot be measured at all. While the strict behaviorist tends toward an overly reductive position, the

staunch subjectivist finds it difficult to give any measurable concrete form to his objectives. Experience tends to draw these extremes together.

It is interesting, moreover, that the departments apparently most successful in their acceptance and formulation of the competency approach, so far, have been those departments in the humanities division which, because of their natural emphasis on intangibles, might be expected to be in trouble with this type of system. The departments normally stressing objective knowledge, on the other hand, still evidence the need for reformulation. The point is that considerable effort is needed to achieve basic conceptual consistency within the total design. Recognizing the nature of college faculties, one is perhaps too sanguine to expect complete consistency. It should go without saying, however, that the term "consistency" as used here does not preclude the listing of essentially different competencies in different courses or aspects of the curriculum.

A problem raised early and late by both faculty and students has to do with the probable reaction of other institutions to the records of students who wish to transfer or to enter graduate school. Since the answer depends upon others outside the immediate context of the plan, final assurance on any scale of generality cannot be given at this time. Some preliminary survey of institutions in the same region indicates varied responses.

Favorable response from graduate schools seems to depend upon (1) the reputation accorded to the college, (2) the relative strength of applicants on entrance or nationally standardized subject-matter examinations, and (3) the adequacy of understanding and completeness of reporting of the new evaluation system. Institutions which equated the new plan with pass-fail systems tended to be negative. Some help comes on this problem from the experience of the Education Department in the placement of graduates in teaching. Personnel officers and superintendents of schools have generally welcomed the more clear-cut detailing of performance capabilities in contrast to letter grades. While employers generally prefer candidates with high-level grades, it is commonly admitted that a straight A student does not necessarily become an outstanding teacher.

On the basis of this information, plus declared faith in the intrinsic superiority of the new system over the old, the college has expressed its position on this problem with the statement: "The record kept of actual achievements will be so much more precise and definitive than the old manner of listing grades and averages that the college anticipates not only no serious difficulty for students transferring or seeking entrance to graduate schools, but actually increasing respect and acceptance by educational authorities and prospective employers as they are made aware of the philosophy and practice

of the new system and witness its products more effectively meeting the challenges of life." Whether this turns out to be true or not remains to be determined. Experience to date, though ambiguous, is certainly not negative.

## Evaluation Procedures

The above discussion of problems and prospects indicates that the faculty and administrative staff have been mindful from the beginning of the need to make a continuous and critical evaluation of this plan of assessing student progress and and achievement. A process of constant revision of competency lists to make them more effective in accomplishing the objectives of the plan goes on in the departments, and several significant improvements of this type could be cited. The Council on Academic Standards directly confronts the problems arising within the system. It has conducted frequent dialogue sessions with student groups and the Faculty Association, not only to explain and interpret the plan, but to receive criticisms and new ideas with regard to its operation. So far general reaction of both students and faculty has been enthusiastically in favor of continuance. No body of sentiment is manifest for serious modification or for returning to the traditional grading pattern.

It should be noted that the College went through its regular full-scale accreditation visit by the North Central Association during the second year of the plan. The final

report of that agency to the College included a request to be informed about the further development of the plan, along with commendation for its innovative character and possibly far-reaching implications for higher education at large.

A problem which has absorbed considerable attention of faculty and administrative staff has been that of how to adequately evaluate the curriculum; the primary concern indeed, that originally brought forward the proposal from the Council on Academic Standards. It was felt, and strongly so, that the old grading system yielded dubious data on which to judge the quality of the curriculum. Use of these data constituted at best an internal system of evidence yielding difficult if not completely unsatisfactory comparisons with other institutions. What was needed, it came to be agreed, was a twofold approach--one facet of which could be fully justified in terms of achieving intrinsic or internal objectives, while the other would provide independent judgment on comparative values.

A separate system of testing, unrelated directly to evaluation of student progress was to have been set up and operated through the office of the Dean of Students. Starting with the College Board scores required as a part of admission to the college, special subject matter examinations (CEEB) would be administered at the end of the freshman, sophomore, and senior years. There was no intention in this of reporting individual scores on the student's official record, but to

develop the necessary summaries which would reveal to the faculty how the performance of the students compared with nationally established norms. Some idea might thus be obtained, it was thought, of the relative quality of the college's curricular offerings as compared with other institutions participating in the same nationwide testing programs. This project has been in partial effect through the past couple of years through the Student Services office and in some departments, but lack of funds has so far limited its total application.

It will be seen from this, however, that the college has not abandoned the comparative or norm-referenced approach entirely: it has simply shifted its use from comparison of individuals (considered inadvisable and probably fallacious) to comparison of programs (a procedure still considered important by accrediting agencies and probably useful for the purpose intended). The resistance against employment of test scores as a means of measuring individual progress seems to rest upon the observation that the success of such evaluation at institutions which have chiefly relied on it depends upon rigorous selection of students at high score levels for initial admission to college. This tack does not appear to be in accord with the basic educational philosophy and experience of this college.

The fact that this College continues to place ninety-five per cent of its graduates in teaching positions each year in spite of current job shortages, may have some relevance, also, as an evaluative measure. Their success in the profession, indeed, is probably the ultimate performance-based criterion.

The problem of evaluation is not easy, especially since little sophistication has developed yet, even among statisticians, in the identification of hard data and comparative measures for the criterion-referenced approach. Performance-based criteria which reduce cognitive and affective competencies of high order to simple behavioral units may be no more successful than the rejected grading tradition. Nevertheless, it is widely recognized that the new pattern for evaluation of student progress needs itself to be carefully evaluated, and effort to that end is continuing.

## Budget

It should be obvious from the foregoing that a great deal of time, energy, and, indeed, money went into the establishment of the plan described. The Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs became a research center before and during the months when the plan was being studied and formulated. Current literature on grading and other means of evaluation had to be assembled, digested, and fed to faculty personnel

and committees. A Faculty Bulletin, sometimes fondly referred to as "Leaves from the Notebook of a Dean," provided bibliographical references, reprints, and summaries of pertinent material. The Council on Academic Standards met for many extra, "long-winded" sessions. Additional faculty meetings and in-service workshop sessions were scheduled. For all of this effort, however, no outside funding or extra budgetary allotment was provided. The time and effort were accepted as a normal part of professional load in a small, private, elementary teachers college. The resources of the institution were marshalled to the purpose as something that must be done for the good of the total enterprise. It is felt to be worth mentioning here only because it is an example of the kind of thing that can be, and often must be, done in such institutional settings. It tends, perhaps, to caution against the supposition that all development is dependent upon special subsidies. Not that some of that money would not have helped, or could not be used in carrying forward a worthy project. We simply had to do with what we had.

## How the Plan Improves Teacher Education

The temptation is to assume that what has been written above sufficiently answers this crucial question. In the main, it does, if the reader knows the institution in question. For those who do not, however, it should be made clear that this College is totally devoted to the production of elementary

school teachers. This means that everything said about the curriculum and the competency-based evaluation system applies to teacher education in this institution. If the objectives of the curriculum and the evaluation procedures are achieved, the product must be better teachers. It would seem that a performance-based program for teacher education may be the next step forward. Undoubtedly this total approach will allow some variants within its total unfolding. If so, the adventure of one small institution may be a significant contribution.

In summary, then, what has been presented in this case study is an account of the establishment and characteristics of a substitute system for traditional letter grades. The bread has been cast upon the waters. In due time, the Bible assures, it will return--whether still edible, or with any increment of wisdom to be gleaned from the experience, only time will tell. Nevertheless, let it be recorded here as one brave new effort to do something constructive about an old and widely acknowledged weakness of American higher education.[8]

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[1] National College of Education Bulletin, 1970-71, p. 37.

[2] Donald P. Hoyt, "The Criterion Problem in Higher Education," Learning and the Professors, O. Milton and E. J. Shoben, Jr., eds. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1968), pp. 125-135; "College Grades and Adult Accomplishment: A Review of Research," The Educational Record, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Winter, 1966), pp. 70-75.

[3] Robert Glaser, "Ten Untenable Assumptions of College Instruction," The Educational Record, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring, 1968), pp. 154-159.

[4]B. S. Bloom, et al., Taxonomy of Educational Objectives I: Cognitive Domain (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1956); David Krathwohl, et al., Taxonomy of Educational Objectives II: Affective Domain (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1964).

[5]B. S. Bloom, "Learning for Mastery," Evaluation Comment (Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Evaluation of Instructional Programs, May 1968), Vol. 1, No. 2.

[6]Robert Bauernfeind, "Goal Cards and Future Developments in Achievement Testing," Proceedings of the 1965 Invitational Conference on Testing Problems (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1966).

[7]Carleton W. Washburne and Sidney P. Marland, Jr., Winnetka: The History and Significance of an Educational Experiment (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963).

[8]The very last sentence of the thoughtful study entitled, Making the Grade: The Academic Side of College Life, by the sociologists Howard S. Becker, Blanche Geer, and Everett C. Hughes (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968), not only summarizes their work but expresses the full poignancy of the current situation: "What is most clear to us is that something ought to be done, for as matters now stand neither faculty nor students achieve their aims." (p. 148).

ABSTRACT FORM

NEW PERFORMANCE-BASED PATTERN

FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

With the advent of the 1969-1970 academic year National College of Education abandoned the use of the traditional grading system as a means of evaluating student progress toward the completion of undergraduate graduation requirements. While many colleges and universities are experimenting on a piecemeal basis with alteration in grading practices, this is perhaps the first recently to move to a totally different pattern across the board for all classes and all courses.

The change was made essentially because the faculty of the college, after much careful study, became convinced that the so-called letter-grade pattern functioned to subvert rather than to support the goals of the curriculum for both the student and the institution. A new and hopefully more effective scheme of evaluation based upon the designation and demonstration of specific sets of competencies appropriate to given courses and levels of learning operates as described below.

I. The academic standing of a student in a course taken for credit toward graduation with a Bachelor of Arts degree is reported by the instructor to the Registrar at the end of the term of registration, or at such other times as may indicate completion of the course requirements.

For each course in which a student registers he is provided with a competency record which designates the specific competencies or demonstrated accomplishments expected of all who complete the course. This record includes accomplishments appropriate to all-college, departmental, and specific course objectives. To complete a course, a student must have each item on the list checked by the instructor, and the signature of the instructor must be entered on the space provided for it. An official copy thus checked and signed is filed by the instructor with the Registrar. The copy of the completed record and/or statement of incomplete is made a part of the student's cumulative file.

II. A regularly registered student in a given course may request the privilege of demonstrating required competencies at any time from the registration date to the final deadline for removing an incomplete, except as otherwise indicated below. If competencies are completed before the end of the registration period for the current term, the student may elect to secure credit for the course under the provision for credit by examination and may enrol at once in a replacement course if he so chooses.

Demonstrations may be in terms of single competencies, clusters of such, or of the entire list. The instructor, however, determines how, when, and with whom the demonstrations are carried out, and arranges a normal schedule for this purpose

to take into account the natural sequence of learning experiences projected for the course. Certain competencies may be required as prerequisite to others. Where participation in certain types of class or group activities is an intrinsic part of the objectives of a course, and of the achievement of specific competencies, such participation may be listed among the competencies required.

The student should at all times be fully aware of the general importance of attendance and of the fact that some competencies may not be achievable without being present where the action is taking place. A student is never justified, except by mutual agreement with the instructor, in absenting himself from class meetings to work independently on competencies.

A student who has requested an opportunity for demonstration of competencies ahead of the class schedule but subsequently has failed to complete may not thereafter request separate privilege to repeat the demonstration, but must adhere to the schedule set up for the course as a whole by the instructor. Because the instructor must distribute his time and energy to helping all members of a class to achieve required competencies, only a limited number of repeated opportunities for demonstration can be reasonably allotted to any single student. Every possible effort will be made by the wise student to be prepared for scheduled demonstrations and to reduce necessary repetitions to the minimum.

While the system is flexible enough to provide additional time for achievement of a high quality of accomplishment, this feature is not meant as an invitation to drifting or neglect of personal accountability. Since the emphasis is placed on actual achievement of personal growth and on learning for its own intrinsic value, every student will find it to his own advantage to avoid unnecessary incompletes or loss of credit, and to make the most of the opportunity presented to become a more truly educated person.

III. If the student has not completed the competencies of a course by the end of the term of first registration, he may elect to receive an incomplete and to finish the course by no later than the close of the next term in residence, or the next term the given course is scheduled if the incomplete requirements are such that they can be done only in class. An incomplete is not automatically given at the end of the first term of registration. An incomplete should be the result of mutual agreement between student and instructor so that each is cognizant of the reasons for incompleteness and what may be expected in the future. In circumstances where this mutual understanding has been informally achieved, or in which emergency factors such as illness prevent contact at the end of the term, the incomplete may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. For non-attendance or lack of attempts to complete competencies, credit may be lost for a course at the end of the term of first registration.

An incomplete should be reported to the Registrar at the time provided for term-end reports. In registering for a new term, the student will be asked to indicate any incompletes to be carried forward so that the course load standards may be maintained. The student is well advised to be concerned about proper reporting of course credit and to assume personal responsibility for keeping the records correct and up-to-date.

It is a departmental prerogative to determine with whom, at what time, and in what fashion a student may resolve an incomplete. All arrangements for this purpose should be made between the student and the instructor at the beginning of the term in which removal of the incomplete is to take place so that sufficient time for demonstration of competencies can be allowed. Instructors cannot be expected to assist students who have made no arrangements prior to the last week or so of the term.

Students who have not completed a course by the end of the second term in residence since first registration (or other designated term for completion) may have a further opportunity of attaining the required competencies through a new registration at full tuition cost the next time the course is offered. For all required courses such repetition for credit is mandatory. If no credit is obtained after this additional opportunity, really the third term of enrolment, the Council on

Academic Standards considers the advisability of further matriculation in the College. In further governing the matter of incompletes, the following rule pertains to the total registered course load of the student: on the assumption that an incomplete represents only a portion of a course to be completed, the load scale is three new courses plus one incomplete, two new courses plus two incompletes, or one new course plus three incompletes.

IV. Space is provided on the competency record for the instructor to add an anecdotal statement of commendation or to note some problem or trait which needs further attention. Commendatory statements may be used by the College Honors Committee for purposes of the Honors Program. These statements may also be used in the advising and counseling process and in judgments determining admission to special programs and to the preprofessional sequence. All such statements, however, are declared by administrative policy to be internal to the institution and are not to appear in any official record submitted to off-campus persons or institutions.

For transfer, admission to graduate study, or employment recommendations, a list of the competencies required in given courses but not the specific competency records of a particular student will be supplied, if requested, in addition to the transcript.

V. A student is placed on academic probation whenever two incompletes have been received in any term or whenever a course is terminated without credit. His case is reviewed periodically thereafter until he succeeds in clearing deficiencies or is dismissed from the College by action of the Council on Academic Standards.

After formal admission to the College a student continues in good standing by making reasonable progress in the degree program which he has planned with his college advisors. Should he fail to achieve this progress over any considerable period of time, he will be suspended from enrolment because of deficient scholarship. It is the student's responsibility to meet all requirements for continued enrolment. For purposes of academic classification a student, therefore, is considered in good standing, even though on probation, as long as he is permitted to remain enrolled.

VI. Since this competency based evaluation plan is so different from traditional grading systems it may be useful here to warn against certain possible misconceptions. It is a criterion-referenced rather than a norm-referenced plan; i.e., it emphasizes criteria of achievement by the individual student rather than measures of comparison between students. It is not a pass-fail system as that term is generally understood. It is not even a pass-incomplete system. It is a new and different pattern of evaluation, probably not translatable in older

terms of letter grades and averages. It is grounded on the psychological finding that a very large proportion of human beings can achieve high quality academic levels if provided with adequate instruction and sufficient time.

It holds high but not impossible standards for everyone. No student gets by with being outstanding in just part of a course. All students are given full opportunity to succeed rather than to fail. Each meets the challenge of demonstrating all required competencies. For some it may take a little longer, but all who really try have the opportunity to fully succeed. Furthermore, the record kept of actual achievements is a true measure of educational development, so much more precise and definitive than the listing of grades and averages that the institution anticipates general and growing respect and acceptance by educational authorities and professional employers as they understand the philosophy and practice of the new system and witness its products in life situations.